

## Section 2. Meeting Planning Requirements for NEPA Approval

The guidance in this section is used to determine TIP/STIP/LRTP/NEPA consistency for FHWA approval of a NEPA final environmental document so that a project can be advanced. Compliance with the NEPA process also requires consideration of *Section 1. Florida LRTP Amendment Thresholds*. In this section, the following acronyms are used:

CE – Categorical Exclusion	PCR – Project Commitment Record
CFP – Cost Feasible Plan	PD&E – Project Development and Environment Phase
CFR – Code of Federal Regulations	PE – Preliminary Engineering Phase (references PD&E and/or Design)
CST – Construction Phase	ROD – Record of Decision
ETDM – Efficient Transportation Decision-Making	ROW – Right of Way Phase
EST – Environmental Screening Tool	SIS-Strategic Intermodal System
FDOT – Florida Department of Transportation	STIP – State Transportation Improvement Program
FHWA – Federal Highway Administration	TIP – Transportation Improvement Program
FONSI – Finding of No Significant Impact	TPO – Transportation Planning Organization
LRTP – Long Range Transportation Plan	
MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization	
NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act	

### Coordination for Consistency and Project Delivery

Coordination and communication is critical to ensure consistency across all documents and to avoid unnecessary project delays. It is important for District Planning, Environmental, Work Program and SIS staff to coordinate seamlessly with FHWA and one another, as well as with the MPO/TPO throughout project development so that all projects meet consistency requirements by the time NEPA approval is needed from FHWA. In order to avoid delays in Federal NEPA or project authorization approvals, the planning documents should be verified at the onset of the PD&E process confirming the status of the project, identifying and then completing needed planning actions prior to final NEPA or project approval. The overall intent of planning consistency is to advance projects derived from transportation plans and clearly describe the steps towards implementation of those plans. Frequent coordination is a valuable aspect for effective project implementation.

### Ensuring Consistency for NEPA Approval

The term “planning consistency” means that the LRTP, TIP, STIP, environmental documents and environmental reevaluations all reflect consistent project descriptions and information. Planning consistency must be met before a final environmental document decision (ROD, FONSI, or CE) can be approved by FHWA. For purposes of this guidance, a “project” is an action by the Department as described in the NEPA document to improve or maintain an existing roadway, or build a new roadway, which may include the following phases: PE, (in some instances the MPO may separate PD&E and